

# THE BRIDE'S FIRST A BIT OF CHRISTMAS.

**M**RS. JOHN VINCENT HARRIS entered the big department store and seated herself at the nearest counter. "No, nothing, thank you," she said to the solicitous clerk. "I just want to make sure I have my list with me. It is so difficult to shop at this time of the year, and it is always difficult to find anything for one's husband. Yes, I suppose many people did their shopping earlier, but I didn't have him then. I mean—

"Why, you sell neckties, don't you? How fortunate! They are on my list. No, I don't think of any particular kind, but something for a tall man. He is a whole head taller than— You say a four-in-hand? Oh, I am afraid he couldn't tie that, but you might give me a two-in-hand. Thank you; that is very pretty, but it is blue. He doesn't like blue. Of course you couldn't know that. Not that one. Why, my papa wears them, and he is his older. Yes, that one will do."

"Mr. Floorwalker, where are the collars? Thank you. (She approaches the counter.) You, please—are you



"THAT CLERK ISN'T A BIT NICE."

busy? I want some collars for my husband. Oh, are these ladies' collars? How stupid! I told that man distinctly I wanted collars.

(At the right place.) "Are husbands' collars here? Well, I am glad I have found the right place at last. Size? You clerks always ask so many questions. I never bought any before, because we've been married only— No, his neck isn't very large. Why, I can reach— But he has real broad shoulders. How nice you are to think of that! Yes, a box of assorted sizes would be just the thing. Some of them would be sure to be right, and I could cut the others off—that is, if they were not too small. You'd better put a nearly all large sizes. You see, I'm starting out as economical as I can. I think it must be so discouraging for a man to have a woman his money on frivolous things. As I was coming down the street I saw a big sale of hats—men's hats. They had been in the window and I little soiled, but I found such a nice one, 1910" soap it would make them look like new. Mr. Harris is very particular about his clothes. He won't wear a hat unless they are pressed. So I bought three of those hats. Do you think they will last him a long time and save money?

"Mr. Floorwalker, where are the gloves? Gentlemen's? Well, I hope he likes. Why, he is my husband. Oh, I see what you mean! Yes, I want them for Mr. John Vincent Harris. (To glove salesman.) Now, don't ask me what size I want. Not too large and not too small. I should think you would learn some of the different sizes so you could tell people. (Holding out her hand.) It's lots larger than that. You think I wear a 6? Well, then, you'd better give me a 12 for him, for he can hold both my hands in one of his. Are these a special sale? Isn't 49 cents cheap for all that kid? Mine cost \$2. No, I don't think he will want more than two or three pairs. Now for the hose.

(In the women's hosiery department.) "Are you busy? I have so many other things to get, please hurry. I just want to know where the other kind of hose are. It's for my husband. Thank you. (At the men's hosiery counter.) I want to get a hose—not like these, but— The size? Oh, about fifty feet. Why, of course, I want it longer than a man. I—I—you don't understand! It isn't this kind I want. No, not ladies' either. I just want a hose we can both use. Mr. Floorwalker, may I speak to you?

"That clerk isn't a bit nice, and I think you ought to punish him. No, he wasn't exactly impudent, but he was too busy to answer my questions. Thank you. I have had so much trouble to find the right kind of hose. I want long—no, I've been to that counter. I want one fifty feet long. You see, we are thinking of moving to the country in the spring, and we shall want to water the yard. Oh, ought I to have asked for the common garden variety?

"Now I think I have everything on my list except cigars, and I may as well go to a cheaper place for them. Because John Vincent Harris always gives away all that I buy for him, he is so generous."—Chicago News.

**Sure Sign.**

It is one sign of age when your friends in looking around for a Christmas present for you search for something that is useful.—Acheson Globe.

By C. E. WYMAN  
(Copyright, 1909, by American Press Association.)

**I**T was Christmas morning and very, very cold. Every few minutes a trainman would come through the car, watching carefully a dial faced thermometer and stopping to turn screws of the heating apparatus in persistent attempts to keep the pointing finger at 70 degrees.

Despite the discomfort of close air, which was none too warm at best, the passengers in the main wore joyous faces and didn't seem to consider the numerous packages and bundles an annoyance.

From a wayside station, which looked as if it had never been neighbor to any house where human beings lived, a poor little girl entered and dropped into a seat where an overcoat told that its owner was probably in the smoking car. The child did not notice this, and in her ignorance of travel it would have made no difference if she had. She might have been eight or ten years old, but that air of self reliance was hers which poverty's child often acquires very young, yet there was nothing forward or "bold" in her appearance. Her dress was of the scantiest—a thin cotton gown, barely concealing the lack of suitable underwear; a little worn shoulder shawl and a battered straw hat.

When the conductor appeared the hand which presented her half fare ticket was red with cold, but the small person lifted to him a wonderfully frank face and confidently informed him that she was going to grandma's for Christmas and that the package she clutched in her other hand contained cookies for grandma.

The conductor smiled down at her. A pitying smile it was, as he thought of his own well fed, well clothed children, with whom he expected to eat a late Christmas dinner when his run was over. The smile lingered on his face as he passed to the next seat and saw that its occupants had heard.

Two women sat in the seat, strangers to each other and as unlike as two persons made on the same general principles could be. One was tall, dignified, young, wrapped in costly furs, everything about her showing the person who never lacked money or leisure; the other, stout, jolly, elderly, comfortable—a kindly and well to do woman. The two had traveled miles and miles side by side with not a word passed between them.

Now both sat with eyes fixed on the forlorn bit of humanity in front of them. Suddenly the younger woman opened her traveling bag and took from it a soft gray shawl. It was at least two yards long and half as wide. Folding it together, she touched the little waif, saying in a low tone, "Stand up, my dear." The child obeyed wonderingly, and this woman in the costly furs placed the folded shawl around the small shoulders, crossed it in front and, bringing the ends to the back, pinned them securely.

"It is yours to keep," she whispered—"a Christmas present." Then, turning to the woman at her side, she said apologetically, "I really did not need it myself." There was a blink of tears in her eyes.

"Well, now," the older woman exclaimed in admiration, "you just set me to thinking! I'm really ashamed that I didn't think of doing something myself. Here, I've got two pairs of mittens for my grandson—just about her size—in my hand bag, and he can't wear out more than one pair this winter. Besides, I can knit another. It's nothing at all to knit mittens." She was busily undrawing the strings of an enormous silk bag, but her glasses were blurred, and her fingers were clumsy with haste.

"What's your name, little girl? Katie? Well, hold out your hand, Katie. My! Aren't they a good fit! There's another Christmas present to keep. And here's a frosted cake. Just eat it right now, Katie. Your grandma won't need it, with all those you've got in your bundle."

The child again obeyed. She did not say, "Thank you." Possibly she did not know how, but she seemed to glow all over, and her eyes returned thanks even if her timid lips did not.

"I'm proud to know you, my dear," the roly poly, comfortable woman said now to the young lady, for she had been saying to herself all the while: "You're the right sort. I can see that."

"And I am proud to know you," the other responded, almost shyly offering her hand, which was quickly buried in a big, warm grasp. "We all long to be of service at Christmas time, you know."

At that instant the man of the overcoat sauntered in to resume his seat. He gave a low whistle of surprise at the happy little traveler next the window, glanced at the two women and comprehended the situation. His right hand made a quick dive into his trousers pocket as if to get some money. In another instant he withdrew it and reached up to the rack overhead and lifted down a large paper bundle. Taking the bundle across the aisle to an empty seat, he opened it and took out a smaller package from among many others. Untying this package, he brought to light a duxen haired doll dressed in the latest style and resplendent in a large picture hat. This he placed in the little girl's arms, saying, "From my little daughter, who would rather you should have it." Then he lifted his hat courteously to the women, took his overcoat on his arm and strode off to find a seat elsewhere. Rich little Katie!

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